3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

hoping that another man will ask for their daughter; this new suitor will have to make payment to the deserted husband. The chief of the village is not consulted unless the return of the husband's presents is long delayed or is in some way unsatisfactory. A woman who claims even remote relationship with the royal family is treated well, because her husband is afraid of the influence which may be used against him. A woman who returns to her parents takes with her the articles she contributed to the home; these are pottery, corn baskets, a wooden pounder, and wooden spoons. If a wife returns to her parents without telling her husband that she intends going, he will beat her if he finds her packing up her utensils.

The procedure of divorce contains a very human element. When a man has fully decided that he would like to divorce his wife, he will first of all inform his parents of his intention. The parents may advise their son to try the girl for a longer time.

On the contrary, the parents of the man may be mischief-makers. Sometimes the parents will say to the husband, "Do you know that your wife is doing these things? It is better you should send her away." If the man is fond of his wife, he will take her to another place where his parents cannot watch her. When a woman divorces her husband to marry another man, she takes to her new home all children under three years of age. Older children go to the home of her parents.

The chief of the village has to witness the final ceremony of divorcing a woman; but the husband and wife, also the wife's father, are the principal people concerned in the divorce ceremony. The husband receives from his wife's father a roll of tobacco and a pig, then he places leaves and palm oil on the back of his wife. He slaps her back saying, "It is finished," after which the woman goes to her father or to another man.

When a woman takes the initiative and has declared her intention of divorcing her husband, she returns to her parents as described; but the divorce cannot be completed until the husband has been persuaded to perform this ceremony of slapping her back and making a ceremonial renunciation in public.

PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH

When a woman finds that she is pregnant, she makes and drinks an infusion prepared from bark fiber. This is to insure the removal of all stringy matter at delivery. Formerly a husband was not

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

youngest sister (*mai yumalele*). Ngonga's father's oldest brother is *tate yukulu*.

Thus far Ngonga was clear about his eligibility for marriage, and in addition to this he was sure that he could not marry a sister of his wife while his wife was alive, but he could marry his wife's sister, after the death of his wife. The wives of a deceased elder brother are divided among his younger brothers, or a man may inherit the wife of his mother's brother. Ngonga always laughed heartily at the idea of marrying a woman much older than himself. He did not know whether he could marry certain older people of the *ndatembo* and *maikulu* class but thought the idea amusing because of their age.

In discussing law, inheritance, and slavery, the importance of the mother's brother will be indicated, and for this relative there is the term *manu* (or *inanu*). The *manu* calls Ngonga *ocimumba cange*, but he calls Ngonga's wife *ndatembo*. Ngonga's mother's brother's wife, also Ngonga's father's sister, are *aphai*, which my informant interpreted as a "female father."

The use of the word *nawa* has been explained in such a way as to show that Ngonga's wife uses this term for a large class of relatives by marriage who are of the same generation as her husband, while these people reciprocally use the word *nawa*. Ngonga uses the word *nawa* in exactly the same way for corresponding relatives of his wife.

This term *nawa* is not to be confused with the term *ndatembo* whose connotation is indicated by the following examples. The wife of Ngonga applies the term *ndatembo* to certain of her husband's relations who are not of his generation. Thus she calls Ngonga's mother *ndatembo* when speaking of her, but she addresses her mother-in-law as *mai* ("mother"), while *ndatembo* describes the relationship between Ngonga's wife and his father. Moreover, Ngonga's wife uses *ndatembo* to describe her husband's father's brother's wife, and Ngonga's wife is called *ndatembo* by her husband's father's sister, her husband's father's sister's husband, and her husband's mother's brother. These are relatives by marriage but they are not of the same generation as her husband.

Table C, Second Generation of Ngonga's Ascendants, gives no particular difficulty. *Maikulu* includes the paternal grandmother, the father's father's sister (great aunt), the maternal grandmother, the mother's mother's brother's wife, and the mother's mother's sister. Therefore *maikulu* is a class name for the second generation of female ascendants.

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A mourning widow must leave her hair loose and undressed, and she has to wear a cloth which conceals her from crown to sole. For three days she is obliged to sleep close to the corpse of her husband with only a stick between them. The stick, which is about the length of the bed, is laid between the widow and the corpse. During this time she has no food, and her wailing is expected to be almost continuous day and night. When the corpse is tied and prepared for burial the widow says farewell to it. Relatives support the corpse and make it advance toward her, while she herself is held in the position of a bound corpse, and is supported by relatives who make her confront the dead body of her husband. The widow does not go to the funeral. 765

Mourning continues after the funeral, with fasting and periodical wailing at three o'clock in the afternoon, and again twelve hours later. At the end of a month of mourning the widow lies for one night in the place where the corpse of her husband lay the night before burial. At the beer-drinking which marks the end of the period of mourning a medicine-man guides the hand of the widow as she dips a ladle into the beer pot and distributes the beverage.

The widow may stay with her mother's brother or she may return to her parents, but she must not become the wife of another man until a year has elapsed. The second husband will make a present to the widow's parents or others who have taken her, but this gift will not be as valuable as if the groom were taking a virgin. 768 587

Tree burial I have not seen, but heard of it near Ngalangi, and it has recently taken place at Cileso. Tree burial is the method for disposing of the corpse of a person who has died in debt. Any one who gives interment to a corpse assumes responsibility for the debts; hence tree burial is the most convenient way of disposal. 766 672

An Ocimbundu from Bailundu said that in that district the child is taken from the womb of a woman who has died pregnant. Food is placed on the lips of the removed foetus so that it will not induce the death of other pregnant women. Near Ngalangi a pregnant woman would be buried with the point of a long stick on her abdomen, and after the grave had been filled a blow would be given to the top of the stick. 766

The foregoing are the principal points of importance in the funeral rites of commoners. Ceremonies connected with the death and burial of medicine-men, kings, chiefs, and hunters require separate consideration. [565]

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have a kinsman's obligation to lend money in case of need if he has it, and it is said that one should only work very occasionally with a brother-in-law. When I asked which a woman preferred, her husband or her brother, men told me that she liked both equally, and the fact that a man and his wife's brother often live close together confirms that there is relatively little for them to quarrel over. A woman does not establish close ties with any of her affines. Formerly, when a man died leaving a widow (and according to some informants a small child) a patrilateral cross-cousin of his might marry her. My informants, however, denied that a sororate had existed even in the past.[27]

Cross-cousins are the relatives with whom solidarity is most strongly felt. When I asked about the relationship between full siblings I was told 'They like each other just as cross-cousins do.' Now that it is no longer customary for agnatic kin to live together, it is often said that it is good to live near cross-cousins.

Formerly funeral friendship (*ukwatjisoko*) was part of an alliance between sub-chiefdoms, which were not contiguous. Nowadays, since people move about the country, funeral friendships may be regarded as another category of kinship—when one asks a man his relationship with somebody else this may be given. There is a tendency to regard *vakwatjisoko*, funeral friends, as being a sort of cross-cousins since both perform funeral services. This survival of funeral friendship, as a tie between individuals and as a haphazard means of supplying undertakers, exists in Gumba. In Ndjandju, which is the sub-chiefdom in which the Missão Católica de Bimbe is built, the *tjisoko* relationship is now established between two neighbouring villages and is apparently the normal means of performing burials, and the permitted theft of small livestock regularly takes place.

Between parents-in-law and children-in-law the relation was and is one of restraint. This is most marked in the relations between in-laws of opposite sex, and least between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

[27] See Albino Alves under (*o*)*mingandjo*, for evidence of a sororate in some Umbundu areas.

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could send food.' 'Perhaps your mother is dead, and she has to think of your father.' A man should not cook for himself in a village, by a rule of convention which has no sanction attached, although he may do so when away working.

Clearing fields, house-building, and thatching are men's work, as are brick-making, fishing, hunting, mat-making, sewing, and woodwork. Beer-brewing, cooking, maize-pounding, and water and firewood gathering are women's work. Men and women can work together in most forms of agriculture, sowing, hoeing, harvesting, feeding small stock and treating tobacco. The division of labour is based on ideas of what is natural and fitting, not on any sanctions, mystical or otherwise. Nor is the division always strictly observed. A man may fetch water if his wife is ill, or simply away visiting relatives, and I have seen an adolescent boy pounding out maize on a pounding-block.

A man should look after his sick wife. There is a song which is sung about the married couples of the village, each being named in turn, which tells how the husband went to the post and his wife climbed a tree to get some fruit down. She fell down and hurt herself and then wailed because there was nobody to look after her. A woman who is ill for some time will return to her kin to get better.

The husband does not attend his wife's funeral, but washes himself all over, and then has to lie down asleep, or as if sleeping, during the funeral. Grains of maize and other crops may be, but are not always, even at pagan funerals, thrown over a woman's coffin as it is taken to the cemetery. A man should leave his old home when his wife dies, although this rule is neglected nowadays, certainly by the owners of brick houses. After a year or two, a widower should *oku wonga*, pile up stones on his wife's grave, a duty which has behind it a vague mystical sanction of illness. The widow of a hunter should be buried beside her husband even though after his death she has married again.[17]

A widow may marry again about six months after the funeral. The exception to this is the *inakulu*, the chief's main wife. Formerly, it was permitted for a widow to marry her husband's

[17] A case of this occurred during my stay.

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587 patrilateral cross-cousin, the reason for this being apparently to enable him to look after the children. Other marriages of a widow with her dead husband's kin were and are forbidden under pain of mystical sanctions. Thus, marriage with one's [684] dead wife's sister would lead to the latter's death through her sister's spirit. Illness or death was suggested as the penalty for marriage with a mother's brother's widow, although I know of two cases of such marriages happening. The reason for this prohibition against any marriage by a widow or widower with the kin of a deceased spouse is given as being that it is wrong to mix the blood.

684 Adultery is subject to mystical sanctions in the illness called *ondjamba* which seems to involve swelling of the legs. This afflicts not the guilty party but the other spouse (whether husband or wife) and the children.[18] I was also told by some informants that this illness affected the other spouse if there were no children; if there were children adultery would endanger their lives and the life of the innocent spouse. Some [683] people do not believe in this nowadays; however the line between believers and non-believers cannot be equalled with that between pagan and Christian or old and young. It is of course impossible to say how frequent adultery is in any community. Informants complain of the frequency of adultery. It should be noted that public opinion seems to condemn it strongly, and men who have discovered their wives being unfaithful usually send them away. The adulterer has to pay a heavy fine, assuming that he does not move away. The usual figure given for a fine was two cattle and a big pig, though in practice the fine would be smaller; in one case in 1948 it was 200 escudos (£2 10s.) and a pig. The word for the man who commits adultery with one's wife, or who marries one's ex-wife, is *tjikwelume* (he of jealousy) a word already referred to in the account of the kinship terminology. There is a rule against eating with him and if one goes to his funeral it is said that one's own death will soon follow. There is a similar rule against a woman eating with the wife of a man with whom she has committed adultery.

[18] For a detailed discussion of this concept, see Hastings, pp. 111–23. It is not nowadays believed that it afflicts people guilty of pre-marital sexual relations.

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Marriages may also be ended by the wife leaving her husband. 586
This may be the consequence of quarrels; however at times a woman may just run off without any apparent reason. Her husband may go to her kin and bring her back or may just get married again—such an episode may occur after many years of a marriage which has previously appeared happy. People 587
who have been married previously can be married again according to the pattern described previously. Middle-aged and elderly people would leave out the festivities and would just have the meal together, or simply count themselves as married by the payment of the bridewealth.

There does exist a formal ceremony of divorce in which 586
maize flour is smeared on the upper part of the face by the husband, and this will take place in the presence of representatives of the wife's kin. A man will do this when his wife has shown herself disrespectful to him or has quarrelled with his kin or her co-wife. As the Ovimbundu regard marriage as [581]
being for the procreation of children, a barren wife should be, [842]
they say, sent away but often in practice this is not done, if the wife is otherwise satisfactory.

Legally, the Portuguese administration recognizes both the 582
customary marriage and the Cathoiic marriage ceremony. The Catholic missions report to the post people who, having been married in church, then make customary marriages, and these may be subjected to such sanctions as being sent to contract labour. The Protestant church marriages are not apparently legally recognized but they are subject to the authority of the Protestant church courts which grant divorces on certain grounds. The *chefe de posto* on his annual visit to take the check on the census may get angry with polygynists, but in fact no very effective administrative action exists with regard to indigenous marriage.

The motives given for polygynous marriage are the desire 595
to have many children and (in the case of a chief) the need to have cooks to provide hospitality for guests. Large-scale polygyny is thought to be rather funny; I was told, as something amusing, that the former chief Mbati had 17 wives. Kafelo, the former chief of Gumba, had 6 wives, the highest number of continuing polygynous marriages I found. In Epalanga out of